



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: OCT. 11, 2005

California Department of Consumer Affairs Urges Consumers to be Fire Safe when Purchasing Products

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Charlene Zettel, Director of the California Department of Consumer Affairs, today urged consumers to keep fire safety in mind when purchasing mattresses and other consumer products such as upholstered furniture, children's sleepwear, and candles as part of National Fire Prevention Week.

"I am encouraging consumers to take a moment to think about fire safety when they buy things," said Zettel. "Especially for such major purchases as mattresses, furniture and the like. California has strict standards for fire safety for furniture and for mattresses. In fact, the federal government is working on regulations that use California's mattress flammability standards as their model."

California's Technical Bulletin (TB) 603 is the nation's first standard requiring that mattresses, mattress/box spring sets, and futons provide protection against an open flame that might cause the product to burn intensely.

DCA adopted TB 603 in January 2005. Since then, the department's [Bureau of Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation \(BHFTI\)](#) increased its overall enforcement efforts. During fiscal year (FY) 2003/2004, the bureau tested 367 samples. In FY 2004/2005 this number increased to 872 samples tested, a 138 percent increase in BHFTI's enforcement testing in the laboratory.

Mitch Ritchie, a counselor with the Firefighters' Kids Camp run by the Firefighters Burn Institute and who was burned as a child on a mattress, echoed Director Zettel's advice.

"People need to be aware of fire dangers in the home, dangers they might not have even thought of, and protect themselves and their families," said Ritchie.

- more -

California Department of Consumer Affairs Urges Consumers to be Fire Safe

2-2-2-2-2-2

Zettel presented Ritchie with a state flag flown over the Capitol, honoring his service as a counselor at the Firefighters' Kids Camp.

The National Fire Protection Association made candle safety its focus for National Fire Prevention Week 2005. The association's theme – "Use Candles with Care: When you go out, blow out!" – was chosen to highlight a growing home fire concern, according Dana Long with the Trauma Prevention Program, Center for Injury Prevention at the U.C. Davis Medical Center in Sacramento. Long says home candle fires have risen steadily over the last decade.

In addition to using candles safely, Long recommended consumers practice their fire escape plan every six months, and do the following with smoke alarms:

- Install on every level of a home;
- Test monthly;
- Replace battery annually; and
- Replace with a new unit after 10 years.

#